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ABSTRACT

This theme issue focuses on the need for adult literacy programs, as well as recent innovations in literacy education. "Adult Literacy and Leadership: Current Innovations" (Aurelio M. Montemayor) describes an adult literacy outreach program in Texas, and discusses the importance of family literacy for parents' involvement in their children's education and for advocacy efforts. "Literacy Is Vital to Democracy" (Mikki Symonds) argues that a functional democracy depends upon the participation of all citizens, which in turn requires education that fosters critical literacy, as well as bilingual education for language-minority students. "Exploring New Directions in Adult Literacy Assessment" (Pam McCollum) recommends a reconceptualization of adult literacy assessment to make it more responsive to student needs and goals. "Implementing Family Literacy" (Ninta Adame-Reyna) describes four types of family literacy programs and offers suggestions for program design and implementation. "Project SALNET: Helping Adult Learners and Their Instructors into the Twenty-first Century" (Laura Chris Green) describes the San Antonio Adult Literacy Network, which incorporates a local electronic bulletin board system into a three-phase program focusing on the writing process, word processing, and reaching an audience through telecommunications. "What IDRA's Project SALNET Has Meant for Our Students" features comments from project instructors. This issue also contains a statement of immigrant students' rights to attend public schools and a list of additional readings on lifelong learning. (SV)

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT • RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

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Adult Literacy and Leadership: Current Innovations

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

IDRA is an independent nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to improving educational opportunity. Through research, materials development, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and information dissemination, we're helping to create schools that work for all children.

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

In August, we met with adults who are involved in literacy classes in Dallas, Texas. In these focus group interviews, conducted as part of the IDRA Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations project, we heard some very interesting things.

When we asked, "How do most people find out about the literacy center and its services? Is there a better way to reach more people?," one person responded: "Letting them know it's nothing to be ashamed of. They are not in this by themselves. There are other people that are trying to better themselves too. So many people are ashamed because they've been teased in school. They're shy about it, they think they're the only one that is going through this."

Another person added: "But not only that, a lot of people go to work and they lose their job sometimes because they figure that even though they come here, they won't do well. They think they'll go too slow and that others will go too fast."

A third person said: "For me, what made me want to do it, to learn to spell, was when my children became teenagers and they came to me, 'Mama, what does this say?' and you couldn't read it to them…I said, well, if I can't help my kids, how can I help myself? I started coming and learning, my son kind of dropped out [of school], and when my son saw me coming back, that made him go back and finish. If you can't read, your kids are like, 'How is she going to tell me to do something, if she can't do it? How is she going to tell me to graduate, when she didn't graduate?' Parents don't look at it like that, but kids think like that!"

Later, we asked: "What messages might best motivate you to inquire about literacy?" One person said: "My brother told me about it and how I can do it, and there's nobody there that is not on the level you're at. Hearing that, I don't need to be ashamed. I can go at my own speed."

Another person said: "My children. If you can't read to your kids, it will probably make them think, 'If she can't read, why do I need to?' People who can't read feel like people who can read are better than them. But we're all the same, no matter the color, what money they have, no one is better than another person.

"There's help out there and people want to help you. Don't you get tired of other people taking care of your business, writing checks? Take care of your own business, keep others out of your business!"

Why Adults?

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), as a child advocacy organization, speaks to and works with adults in various groups: educators directly responsible for the education of children, policy makers whose decisions affect the quality of our schools and the resources available to schools, the broader public, and the families of the children, especially those who most need high quality education to change the circumstances of their lives.

Why Literacy?

Last year, IDRA published *The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s* with facts about literacy in San Antonio and recommendations for solutions to the problem (see box on Page 5). In the foreword, Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA's execu-

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Popularized in the early 1970s by author Thomas Kuhn, "paradigms" are our models or patterns of reality, shaped by our understanding and experience into a system of rules and assumptions about the world around us. The call for restructuring in education, emerging from a profound sense that education is not working for all children, requires a transformation in how we see schools, students, and their families. If we are to find a new and equitable vision of what education can and should be, new lenses are required to change the way we look at schools and the populations in them – as demonstrated by our "Now" thinkers below.

That is THEN... *This is NOW...*

"There's an epidemic with 27 million victims. And no visible symptoms." - advertisement by the National Advertising Council, 1989	*"The medical metaphor, with its crass implication that people are diseased and that there is an epidemic in our midst, suggests that illiterates are contagious and are to be shunned or feared...As the model is questioned at other levels of education, so it certainly should be rethought in adult literacy education circles."* - Paul Ilsley and Norman Stahl, "Reconceptualizing the Language of Adult Literacy," *Journal of Reading*, September 1993
"In human terms, the price of illiteracy is staggering. People who can't read, often can't work. They make up 50 percent to 75 percent of this country's unemployed." - advertisement by the National Advertising Council, 1989	*"Equating illiteracy with unemployment, or for that matter, crime, drug abuse, or any other social evil, rests on the assumption that the inability to read necessarily makes a person a societal burden, and fails to note the productivity of illiterate, semiliterate, and non-English-speaking adults."* - Paul Ilsley and Norman Stahl, "Reconceptualizing the Language of Adult Literacy," *Journal of Reading*, September 1993
"I am doing battle here in America – not with planes, tanks and guns – but a battle against illiteracy...We most urgently need your support if we are going to win this crusade once and for all." - fund-raising letter, Laubach Literacy International, January 1995	*"Like the medical metaphor, the military metaphor is based on a deficit model. The logic of it leads one to believe that conquering the enemy will bring peace (or peace of mind)...While such militaristic talk highlights the problem of illiteracy for the public, it skirts the harsh analysis that the populace would find of little direct interest."* - Paul Ilsley and Norman Stahl, "Reconceptualizing the Language of Adult Literacy," *Journal of Reading*, September 1993

LITERACY IS VITAL TO DEMOCRACY

Mikki Symonds, M.A.

Since my earliest years of schooling, I understood democracy to be the best form of government because it is the most just. It is the most just because all citizens have a say in their government. The fact that citizens have the right to discuss and participate in governmental matters make our system of government uniquely fair. This concept of our government filters into our daily lives and allows us to feel proud of our country. The freedoms that we, ordinary citizens, can enjoy – such as free speech, the right to assemble publicly, and the right to express (or not disclose) our religious beliefs – make us grateful that we live here.

But what does it take to sustain, or strengthen, a democracy? In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man [sic] should receive those papers and be capable of reading them" (Jefferson, 1787). Jefferson, who dedicated his life to democracy, stressed that every person should have access to information and be able to understand the information. For a democracy to flourish, *all* citizens must have the tools necessary to make responsible decisions about their laws and leaders and to envision their collective future. Otherwise, it is not a democracy.

When 21 to 23 percent of adults in the United States are functionally illiterate, democracy appears attenuated at best (Montes, 1994). How can a government be *for* the people and *of* the people when nearly one-fourth of its adults cannot read a ballot or a newspaper, cannot publicize their own beliefs, and cannot advocate for themselves or their children through written means?

What Needs to Happen in Literacy Instruction

In their *IDRA Newsletter* article, "Language, Literacy, and Educational Reform: Rethinking the Issues," María de la Luz Reyes and Pam McCollum discuss the fact that many educational reforms, language policies and literacy programs have been created solely for the perspective of learners from the dominant culture (1992). This complicates nonmainstream students' literacy acquisition. Too often, pedagogy fails theoretically and practically to account for the learners' language and culture.

> ***A LACK OF FULL SUPPORT CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE SOME CHILDREN ARE SEEN AS OUTSIDE OF THE NATION'S INTERESTS.***

Also, minority children will make up one-third of the U.S. school-age population by the year 2000. Like all children, they must become fully participating citizens by the time they leave school. They must become not only a responsible workforce, but also citizens who contribute and hold their government accountable. Through extensive research and experience, IDRA understands that for language-minority students to achieve literacy, they must first attain literacy in their native language and apply that knowledge base to a second language. Moreover, this pedagogy must address and utilize the students' culture in order to provide a basis for their acquisition (García, 1994).

What Needs to Happen in Policy

To ensure the growth of democracy, policies at all levels must delineate a path by which educators and the general public can guarantee that all students will enjoy fully their citizenship through financially and philosophically supporting bilingual education. A lack of full support creates an atmosphere where some children are seen as outside of the nation's interests. Consequently, we are ill-prepared to assist them in developing their gifts that are necessary to this country's well-being. Reyes and McCollum state that policies making bilingual education a transitional program preclude the students' integration into the regular program and lead to a vision of the programs as auxiliary programs. As a result "it also engendered an attitude...that the education of nonmainstream students, particularly language-minority students, was someone else's responsibility" (1992). But, how can a shared future be someone else's responsibility?

In addition to supporting bilingual literacy efforts, national, state and local policies must support literacy development that draws from the strengths of the learners and results in more than the ability to read and write. All people have strengths that assist the learning process. People who lack literacy do not hold an inability to engage in "systematic thinking that involves abstraction...[because] reasoning, literacy, and numeracy...consist of skills that are reflexively constituted in the context of situation and purpose" (Erickson, 1984). Therefore, the ability to read and write does not separate individuals cognitively. Recognizing this fact is the first step to drawing from the strengths of learners.

Policies and instructors must also do the following:

- Avoid privileging grammar and written texts over the learners' experiences (McLaren and Tadeu da Silva, 1993),
- Understand that learners contribute (insights, bases for their learning, dialogue) to the learning process (Lankshear, 1993), and
- Use what is meaningful to the learners as an instructional base (García, 1994).

Literacy providers, policy makers and schools can encourage critical literacy – literacy that surpasses the mechanical ability to read and write.

Conclusion

The need for encouraging critical literacy is strong because the great project of this nation – democracy – cannot develop completely unless pedagogy and policy instill in individuals their responsibility to engage themselves daily in deciding how that information involves them and how they must participate. Offering less, sacrifices "the critical analysis of the social and political order which generates the need for reading in the first place" (Macedo, 1991).

Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, concludes that the United States' success – immigrants from different nations building a new nation – lies in its commitment to democracy and self-government and that democracy is the great educator and the great unifier (Schlessinger, 1992). Extending this success – envisioning and creating a nation where people from all cultural, economic and educational back-

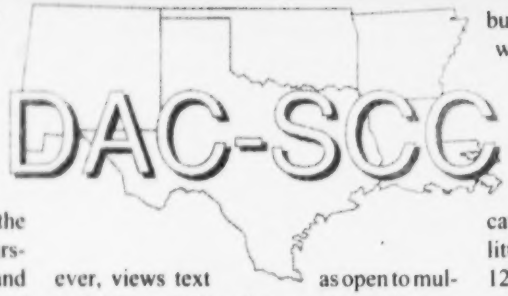
Literacy Is Vital - continued on page 14

Like other children, students whose first language is other than English bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to school. But historically, standardized tests have provided little or no useful information about these students' language or cognitive abilities. The use of assessment and testing data has too often been limited to holding students accountable, offering little or no help to guide improvement efforts or foster collective accountability. IDRA works with all parties that have a vested interest in the educational outcomes produced by the schools – the students, the educational practitioners, the families and the broader community – to use data to frame solutions, monitor progress *and* hold all of the participants involved in the educational process accountable for the end results. IDRA is helping schools find solutions to traditional methods of testing and assessment, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to become empowered learners.

EXPLORING NEW DIRECTIONS IN ADULT LITERACY ASSESSMENT

Pam McCollum, Ph.D.

The assessment of adult students' acquisition of literacy is an area that traditionally has received little attention. Perhaps it has been avoided because with all the variability in adult literacy programs, assessment is problematic. The variability in adult literacy programs stems from several factors – the variety of types of adult basic literacy courses (learner centered, competency-based and job related); the wide range of types of literacy providers (volunteers, certified professional adult educators) and contrasts in instructional settings and curricula. The element possibly contributing most heavily to the diverse nature of adult literacy instruction are the learners themselves. As adults, students come to the learning situation with an array of differing personal histories, educational experiences, unfulfilled needs and anticipated goals. Ironically, given the large variance in adult literacy instruction, the only constant seems to be how literacy acquisition is assessed.



The Problems of Norm Referenced Tests

Presently, most programs in adult basic education (ABE) assess students' literacy development with group administered norm referenced standardized tests. But, the use of norm referenced tests with adults who are not proficient readers is questionable on severable counts. First, such tests probably are associated with earlier unsuccessful attempts to learn to read and may set up students for continued failure. Second, the results of standardized tests of adult literacy often give scores in grade equivalents that have little meaning or relevance for adults. Third, problems with standardized discrete point tests stem from their theoretical perspective that positions text as autonomous in nature (Street, 1984). In this view, text has only one correct interpretation. The ideological or constructivist model however, views text as open to multiple interpretations that vary given the context in which a text is read or the background knowledge of the reader. The latter approach is much more realistic for adults of widely differing cultural and experiential backgrounds. Finally, perhaps the most serious fault with present testing is that it is divorced from real life uses of literacy. Adults who have experienced failure in literacy need to see a direct connection between their needs, their goals for learning, classroom instruction and assessment.

The two most widely used tests in adult basic education are the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE). Interestingly, the TABE was normed on children and its scores are given in grade equivalents (Metz, 1994). Stricht faults the TABE for being too difficult for anyone with less than a third grade reading level and criticizes the ABLE for requiring inappropriate background knowledge in order to complete the reading comprehension subtest (1990). Adult non-readers are a population that would be more adversely affected by tests requiring high levels of background information due to their customary low levels of education. This situation also begs the question whether or not such a test *really* measures reading comprehension. Without proper background information even a proficient reader would be unfairly hampered in comprehending the meaning of a text. This practice is not a sound measurement technique for anyone, but especially not for low-schooled adults with reading difficulties.

Another commonly used assessment practice in adult basic education involves defining levels of literacy in equivalent *years of schooling*. While the evaluation is easily understood by educators, it is not very informative and is of little utility. Conceivably, someone in the 12th grade might be unable to read while someone who has dropped out of school might read rather well. The *grade level equivalent* is probably the most widely used definition. It is generally accepted that the ability to read above the fifth grade level constitutes reading ability (Dinnan, 1980). Those reading below fifth grade level are considered to be illiterate. Using this rating system with adults gives the erroneous impression that reading tests that were normed on children and that give results in grade equivalent scores are also appropriate for adults.

Reading tests targeted to children may have situations and content that adversely effect adult test performance as well as their perceptions of themselves as readers. Being placed in childlike situations may be distasteful and contribute to adult students' dissatisfaction with adult literacy courses. Moreover, using tests with students who are not similar to those in the norming population of the test violates a basic tenet of testing. Unfortunately, these practices occur frequently in adult literacy courses due to a lack of appropriate standardized measures as well as appropriate assessment models for adult education.

Looking at Functional Literacy

The functional literacy or competency-based definition of literacy provides the best and most workable base for an adult literacy program. Functional literacy is de-

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Exploring New Directions - continued from page 4

fined as the level of skills needed by individuals or populations to be able to complete a certain real-life reading task (Kirsch and Gutherie, 1977-1978). Another variation of the definition of functional literacy that fits particularly well with the assessment approach I suggest was proposed by Hunter and Harman (1979). They define functional literacy as "the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, job-holders and members of social, religious or other associations of their choosing" (Hunter and Harman, 1979). This approach, by definition, includes adult reading materials in the course syllabus. It also has the added advantage of connecting reading to real-life skills. Finally, it opens the door to making the adult literacy student an active partner in assessing his or her own progress in literacy development.

THE FIRST STEP IN REVAMPING ASSESSMENT IN ADULT LITERACY IS TO MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO STUDENTS' NEEDS.

New Directions

The issue of how to best assess adult literacy needs to be reconceptualized. Instead of administering tests for administrative purposes alone, adult educators need to determine what constitutes success in adult literacy and then proceed to assess it from a number of different perspectives.

Reconceptualizing new ways of conducting long established methods of operation is often difficult. Breaking away from previous conceptual molds is challenging. For example, in this country, it is difficult to conceive of adult literacy instruction that does not require some means of formal testing to determine students' reading ability. In the United Kingdom however, there is no formal required assessment of reading in adult literacy classes (Finlay and Harrison, 1994). Students and tutors collaboratively determine each student's syllabus of study and his or her goals for learning through information gained in an initial interview.

Exploring New Directions - continued on page 14

How has literacy been defined?

Historically, literacy has been associated with the ability to speak, read and write. A more recent definition adds the context in which people need to know these skills, their everyday applications. This concept of literacy was used by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)'s National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) to arrive at the following definition for literacy:

Literacy is "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goal, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."

This dynamic definition is based not only on society's changing needs but also on the individual's changing relationship to that society. In practical terms, NCES classified literacy in these three broad categories:

Prose Literacy	Understanding and using information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction
Document Literacy	Locating and using information in materials such as job applications, transportation schedules and maps
Quantitative Literacy	Applying arithmetic operations in situations such as balancing a checkbook, determining the annual interest on an advertised loan or figuring out a tip

This definition provides a more realistic picture of our national and local literacy situations by taking into account the real effects of illiteracy in people's lives. IDRA's study, however, is based on 1990 census data and is an update of a similar study conducted by IDRA in 1983 using 1980 census data. Our definition of literacy is, by necessity, more conservative than the one applied by NCES. *In our definition, literacy is associated with achieving a ninth grade or higher educational level. Data are provided for adults, 18 and over.* This definition should be considered a *bare minimum* and, as such, our results should be seen as a *conservative estimate.*

What Communities Can Do for Literacy

IDRA's *The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s* provides a valuable list of recommendations that applies to all communities. These recommendations have implications for individuals, service providers and businesses in the community. Below is a list of the main recommendations included in the report.

Conduct your own literacy "reality check" using *The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s* as a starting point.

Provide for better communication among service providers, clients and the broader community.

Increase and enhance services. Target resources and programs.

Make practical connections to jobs and work.

Work with schools on dropout prevention programs.

Provide greater access.

Improve staff development.

Improve coordination.

Assess services.

Assure cultural and language compatibility in staff and materials and draw on cultural strengths such as strong family relationships.

For details on the implications of these recommendations for individuals, service providers and businesses in the community see Page 18 to order a copy of *The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s* ($10).

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One constant element in student achievement is parental involvement. Research and analysis of the past 15 years conclusively demonstrate that when parents are involved in their children's education, children do better in school, and the schools do better, too. IDRA believes that parents are intelligent and want the best education for their children. Parents of all socio-economic levels and all cultural groups can participate meaningfully in their children's schools. They can act as a driving force for innovations that improve the education of their children. IDRA helps parents and schools examine ways in which they can make a difference in their students' academic success.

IMPLEMENTING FAMILY LITERACY

Ninta Adame-Reyna, M.A.

Agreement about the importance of family literacy is widespread. Researchers have found that promoting a positive attitude toward literacy significantly impacts children's learning. But, there is less agreement on the goals of family literacy programs and how families and schools can collaborate to learn from each other.

E.R. Auerbach cites studies showing that "children whose home literacy practices most closely resemble those of the school are more successful in school" (1989). He also notes that this is often interpreted to mean that low-income or language-minority parents have inadequate parental skills, practices and materials. This *deficit* perspective underlies some programs that seek to transmit school literacy through the family. This model assumes that (1) homes of low-income and immigrant families are "literacy impoverished," (2) literacy is transmitted solely from parent to child, ignoring the dynamics of many immigrant families, (3) literacy acquisition in school is more important than in the home or is already adequate, and (4) cultural differences in attitudes toward school or child-rearing are obstacles to be overcome in order to meet school-determined expectations (Kerka, 1991; IDRA, 1988). Auerbach suggests that, rather than transferring school practices into the home, programs should draw on parents' knowledge and experiences to shape instruction (1989).

Defining Your Program

The first step in building family literacy is to arrive at a definition of what family literacy means to you as an educator or coordinator. As you arrive at a definition, the role of family literacy will begin to define itself. However, because practitioners and researchers come from diverse backgrounds, there is debate about definition, program philosophy and instructional methods (Kerka, 1991).

Two commonly accepted definitions of family literacy are that (1) family literacy programs should focus on parent and child and (2) programs should be "intergenerational" involving other family members, neighbors, guardians and adult volunteers as well. S. Kerka offers four basic program types (1991):

1. **Direct Adults – Direct Children**. This highly structured model offers the most intensive formal literacy instruction for adults and children. It also has a high degree of parent-child interaction.
2. **Indirect Adults – Indirect Children**. This program involves voluntary attendance, short-term commitment and less formal learning through literacy enrichment events. Generally, reading skills are not directly taught, although adults may receive literacy tutoring.
3. **Direct Adults – Indirect Children**. Adults are given literacy instruction, often in seminars or workshops, and may receive coaching on reading with their children and other activities that influence children's literacy.
4. **Indirect Adults – Direct Children**. In-school, preschool or afterschool programs develop children's reading skills. Parents may be involved in workshops, reading rallies or other events.

Through IDRA projects such as the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, the Family English Literacy Project and other parent involvement and early childhood training activities, IDRA has had the opportunity to implement all four of these basic program types. Each program type has been found to be effective in increasing the literacy skills of adults and children.

Implications for Program Development

As the decision is made about the type of program that will best serve your needs, other decisions must be made. Kerka offers the following list of program implications

***Implementing Family** - continued on page 15*

"AN OFFICIAL INDONESIAN ESTIMATE, MADE IN 1985, WAS THAT ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF ADULTS WERE STILL ILLITERATE AND ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF THOSE WERE WOMEN."

– David Wigg, *In a Class of Their Own: A Look at the Campaign against Female Illiteracy*, The World Bank, 1994

"COURSE OFFERINGS SOMETIMES ARE MORE SUITED TO MEN THAN WOMEN. WOMEN IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ARE INVOLVED IN 80 TO 90 PERCENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. HOWEVER, ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN TEND TO EXCLUSIVELY ADDRESS HOUSEWORK, COOKING AND CHILD CARE."

– Laurel Puchner, "Incentives for Adult Learning in Developing Countries: Lessons and Comparisons," 1994

"ABOUT 9 PERCENT (17 MILLION) OF THE UNITED STATES ADULT POPULATION IS ILLITERATE. IN TEXAS, THE ILLITERACY RATE IS 12 PERCENT (1.5 MILLION) WHILE IN SAN ANTONIO, IT IS 15 PERCENT (100,000)."

– *The State of Literacy in San Antonio in the 1990s*, Intercultural Development Research Association, 1994

Spotlight on Technology

Appropriate uses of technology give us a new opportunity to provide excellent education for *all* children. With this opportunity, the learning process can be transformed so that students truly are the center of the learning process. Student needs, characteristics and cultural diversities can then become part of that center; classrooms can be places to learn, more than places to teach. Technology can also transform the way schools operate. Student progress can be assessed in new ways. Schools and families can communicate with each other more effectively. Programs can be evaluated quickly and accurately. IDRA is helping teachers and administrators design ways of utilizing emerging technology to make schools work for *all* children.

Project SALNET: Helping Adult Learners and Their Instructors into the Twenty-First Century

Laura Chris Green, Ph.D.

Adult learners bring special strengths to their learning. Many can tell tales of special family moments and long ago legends with spellbinding skill and power. Others know how to raise cattle or grow a garden, cook delicious, healthy meals or quilt a beautiful family heirloom. All have acquired at least some degree of wisdom as they have moved through life's highways and byways, sorrows and joys. Their teachers can harness these hard-won strengths to assist adult learners in acquiring literacy and life skills.

IDRA's Project SALNET (San Antonio Adult Literacy Network), funded by the Texas Education Agency, is founded on a philosophy that values these strengths as it serves the needs of adult learners, many of whom do not speak English, who read and write with difficulty, and who struggle daily with serious poverty. The project offers these learners the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas and describe their life experiences in writing. It uses the latest technological tools to provide them with a safe, supportive audience of other adult learners who can help them fine tune and polish their creations. The holistic methods and techniques of the process approach to writing are supported by access to a local electronic bulletin board system (BBS) and to user-friendly communications and word processing programs. Learners acquire practical and important computer literacy skills and become more self-confident as they improve their oral and written language skills.

A tool is only as powerful and as effective as the people who use it. The administrators and instructors who implement Project SALNET were computer novices when the project began. They have become bold adventurers in the world of instructional technology. Their own words (see reflections on next page) attest to the growth they have experienced as teachers and co-learners with their students.

Professional Development Model

Adult basic education (ABE), General Education Development (GED) certificate, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish literacy instructors have participated in Project SALNET training. Some of their students are at the lowest levels of functional literacy and/or of English proficiency. Most of the instructors had little or no knowledge of computers prior to the training. Overcoming their hesitations and fears has been the most challenging aspect of the project.

The professional development model used in IDRA's training mirrors the sequence of activities and skills training that participating instructors were expected to impart to their adult students. That is, the instructors practiced new literacy and technology skills in their workshop sessions and then taught these skills to their students.

Phase I of the training addressed the teaching of writing without the use of technology. Phase II focused on using word processing for enhancing the teaching of writing, and Phase III trained the instructors

***Project SALNET** - continued on page 9*

IDRA's Project SALNET gives literacy instructors and students the opportunity to communicate with each other electronically through a bulletin board system (BBS) that welcomes users with the message below.

Welcome to SALNET!

The SALNET (San Antonio Adult Literacy Network) BBS is designed to help adult learners and instructors in the San Antonio area improve their literacy and teaching skills and communicate with each other. Adult educators interested in how Project SALNET functions are also welcome as visitors.

Adult learners at the three SALNET sites (Columbia Heights LLDC, Project Learn to Read - Bazan Library, and Project Learn to Read - Collins Gardens) are encouraged to use the Microsoft Works word processing program to write poems, recipes, resumes, stories, etc. They can then send the things they have written to students at other sites for their comments and ideas. They can also write each other messages by joining in on the conversations in the conference areas.

Adult instructors can write each other to share problems and solutions in implementing Project SALNET through the E-mail area or leave messages to the *sysops* if they need the assistance of the project director (Dr. Chris Green) or technical advisor (Dr. Felix Montes).

Visitors are welcome to peruse the conference, E-mail and bulletin areas for more information on how the network functions.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT IDRA'S PROJECT SALNET HAS MEANT FOR OUR STUDENTS...

Instructors participating in IDRA's Project SALNET in San Antonio, Texas, were invited to talk about what the project has meant for them as educators and for their students. Below are excerpts of what they said.*

"Project SALNET has given students access to a word processor and the opportunity to become familiar with Microsoft Works, Encarta, Paintbrush and a variety of other popular software. The element of control that computers provide has been an important aspect of our students' experience. They discover, for example, that they can "cruise" Encarta for information in which they are interested and quickly become immersed in reading to satisfy their own needs and curiosity.

"Staff at the Bazan Learning Center have been surprised to find that most beginning level learners approach learning to work with computers with the same innocence that children bring to the experience. They appear to have few of the prior expectations or anxieties that adults normally exhibit when faced with learning a new task which they assume will be difficult. All of the instructors agree that students have grown significantly in confidence and self-esteem as they continue to develop their skills on the SALNET computers and that their students have benefitted from their instructors' own growth in skill and confidence."

– Mary Cantú, manager, Project Learn to Read – Bazan and Collins Gardens

"SALNET has provided an extraordinary opportunity for the students of Columbia Heights Learning and Leadership Development Center (LLDC). Students have access to Microsoft Works and multimedia computer technology that provides students with a wide variety of editing, revising and writing resources. The program provides hands-on training with a word processor giving students confidence and marketable job skills. The SALNET project has successfully offered to students methods to creatively brainstorm writing ideas and capture in writing their inner imagination and expression. Several students at the Columbia Heights Learning Center have made practical use of their new word processing skills by producing their own resumes. This and other writing activities allow students to practice editing and revising with meaningful material that they have produced themselves."

– Kimber Camarillo Jones, director, Columbia Heights LLDC

"The SALNET equipment provides a *special way* to show the student he or she is special. We can honestly tell them that the equipment is for their writing. SALNET provides students the opportunity to use 'hi tech' equipment. Many people who have used computers in the past or use computers now have never used a mouse. Others have never used a computer at all. It is a self-esteem builder – I was very excited when I first saw the finished product the computer gave me. I know the students feel the same.

"Working on computers also has the advantage of anonymity for beginning level learners who are worried about having their mistakes or perceived lack of knowledge exposed to strangers. Our concern with our one-on-one students is our ability to preserve the privacy about their learning and this gives them the opportunity to communicate their work to someone and not leave their comfort zone or come face-to-face with the person who is looking at their work."

– Esther Cantú, administrator, Project Learn to Read

"A real highpoint was our student recognition day this year. We printed and mounted our students' work on bright pieces of construction paper for the ceremonies. They excitedly guided their family members and other guests to the many displays on the walls to show them the professional print coupled with graphics. Their work was a wonderful source of pride and pleasure for them.

"The project's methods were especially stimulating for our ABE [adult basic education], ESL [English as a second language] and special needs students. The more tactile, kinesthetic environment seemed to better meet their individual learning styles and to help them display more creativity. I also noticed that students were more attentive to details and 'getting this right' when they used word processing. They were able to tackle more difficult and challenging assignments as time went on. Now they are able to set and express goals for themselves. They see that creating through technology can be a real and enriching part of their lives. I also noticed that several younger students and 'drop-ins' were so attracted to the activities my group was doing that they joined in and stayed."

– Laura Edwards, ESL instructor, Project Learn to Read

What SALNET Has Meant - continued on page 9

What SALNET Has Meant *- continued from page 8*

What Project SALNET Has Meant to Me as an Educator...

"Project SALNET has improved and extended my teaching skills and allowed me to interact with other teachers and administrators from other agencies in San Antonio. We exchange methods and experiences which help our students acquire literacy. We have realized how universal is the need and desire to express ideas through writing and how valuable the writing experience is for our students. In addition, we have learned computer skills such as word processing similar to the skills our students are learning and experiencing."

– Charlie Vela, GED instructor, Columbia Heights LLDC

"The project has provided us with professional training and workshops on techniques to use in implementing SALNET and developing student creative and mechanical writing ability. Our center now has a much more computer literate staff that has the capability to guide and enhance the computer and writing experiences of our students."

– Kimber Camarillo Jones, director, Columbia Heights LLDC

"I have found this class to be a clever and enjoyable way to entice people to write. The exercises selected and developed by the project director were most fascinating. They drew the participants together into an exciting personal journey which was later shared with the class. The exercises, materials and format were designed to encourage students to express themselves and 'say their share.' I learned various methods of helping new readers use their cultural knowledge and personal experiences to write. Now I know how to stimulate the minds of students with things such as the use of 'dichos' and the exercise on colors."

– Esther Cantú, administrator, Project Learn to Read

**Project SALNET was developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association and is funded by the Texas Education Agency. It is being implemented at four sites in San Antonio. For more information see "Project SALNET: Helping Adult Learners and Their Instructors into the Twenty-first Century" on Page 7 or call IDRA at 210/684-8180.*

Project SALNET *- continued from page 7*

to use telecommunications to provide audiences for their students' writing.

Phase I: The Writing Process

Phase I training sessions were devoted to the writing process. Like the highly successful Writing Projects (the New Jersey Writing Project, the Bay Area Project, the Texas Writing Project, etc.), the teachers learned how to teach writing by writing themselves and by reflecting on how prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing activities influence both the quality and quantity of the writing.

The instructors learned that attention to mechanics and form are inappropriate at the prewriting and first draft stages, especially for inexperienced writers. They learned that stimulating memories and associational networks through brainstorming, guided imagery, group discussions and experiences, listing, and other heuristic techniques should precede the first draft. They saw how reading aloud meaningful literature selections can stimulate thought and writing and that choosing a topic with personal significance is of paramount importance.

The instructors experienced writing collaboratively, creating a group product and discussing how learners with more skills can support those with less. They shared their pieces with their peers and saw how supportive responses can motivate them to refine and polish their works. They learned that editing for publication to a real audience should be the final step and that it allows students to practice spelling, usage, capitalization and punctuation skills in context, enhancing comprehension and retention of rules and exceptions.

As part of their training, the instructors kept a binder of the teaching resources given to them and the works they created during the workshop sessions. One section of the binder containing their creations became their personal portfolios. The first part, called *Journals and Jottings*, was used to collect prewriting notes, journal entries, lists of topics and other sources of ideas for pieces. Another section, *Works in Progress*, contained first and subsequent drafts that had not yet been completed. The section, *Final Expressions*, housed final drafts that were ready for publication. Thus, the instructors experienced the activities and procedures being recommended for use with their students, in this case, the establishment of portfolio collections of their students' writings.

Phase II: Using Word Processing

Phase II of the training and instruction moved instructors and students into computer labs to learn word processing. Research has shown that beginning writers who use word processing for their compositions create longer pieces with fewer errors (Green, 1991). There is also considerable evidence that the quality of the writing and the writer's willingness to revise and edit are increased by computer assisted writing. Increased desire to write and pride in one's creations are also common findings.

By Phase II, participants had created at least one first draft using paper and pen or pencil. Some had created up to four or five different drafts because some were able to attend training regularly and others only occasionally. These drafts were used by the instructors and the students for their first experiences with word processing. They input their first, handwritten, drafts into the computers, creating second, electronic, drafts. Some of the instructors already had some experience with word processing and helped the workshop leader give individual attention to those who had never touched a keyboard before. Those with some knowledge were paired with

Project SALNET *- continued on page 10*

Project SALNET - continued from page 9
those with zero knowledge.

Computer skills that were introduced first helped the writers with initial inputting. Basic cursor movement, word wrapping, and special keys such as Enter, Insert, Delete, Backspace, Page Up and Page Down were demonstrated and practiced. Some learners also needed introduction to the Shift, Caps Lock and Tab keys. Commands for naming and saving files on diskette were also taught in the first word processing session.

Once the learners had input their entire first drafts, double-spaced copies were printed of the now second drafts. These printouts were proofread by individuals and their partners using color coding, editing marks, circling, etc. to indicate places where the writers want to make changes. Then the writers returned to their computers to make additions, corrections and deletions. They were shown how to use spell checkers; vary fonts, alignments and margins; block text using a mouse or keyboard; and use editing commands such as Search, Replace, Cut, Paste, Copy and Undo. These skills were taught as they were needed for the changing of their documents. Relying on information sources other than the teacher such as the on screen Help function, software manuals, command lists and summaries, and the knowledge of their peers was encouraged. The instructors also learned that trial and error could often help them find answers. Stressing that files need to be saved frequently so that mistakes and losses of power are not too costly was reiterated from the beginning.

Phase III: Reaching an Audience Through Telecommunications

In recent years, many programs with students of all ages and at all literacy levels have combined the writing process with word processing with notable success. Using telecommunications to extend the audiences for their works is, however, a relatively new idea. Many educators are currently experimenting with national and world-wide networks through such channels as the Internet, Tenet, Prodigy and America Online. Although Project SALNET may end up exploring these global environments, our first objective was to have adult learners at the four different sites in the city communicate with each other.

After students create their second drafts using word processing, these files are sent by modem to assigned peer responders at another site for their feedback and review. Just as they have been responding orally to their classmates at their own sites through teacher-directed peer response activities, they now respond in writing to peers at other sites, telling them what they liked and disliked about their pieces and making some suggestions for improvement.

Both the writer and the responder can remain anonymous as each are allowed to follow the practice of BBS's all over the country and use self-selected aliases as their pen names over the electronic network. This lets them protect their identities should they choose to do so, and it gives them the opportunity to try on new personae. Speaking from behind this mask of a new name and perhaps a new personality can give a spirit of adventure and fun to the entire enterprise.

The project instructors were introduced to the SALNET bulletin board system by sitting down at a terminal and signing on to the system under the direction of the lead trainer and project director. Small groups of five instructors each were trained at a time. The trainer demonstrated the process the first time and then had each of the instructors take a turn at dialing up the BBS, logging on, registering, joining a conference, reading and sending an E-mail message, and uploading and downloading files. Referring to the BBS bulletins both on-line and on paper and to step-by-step directions on paper helped the instructors feel they could return to their centers and try the process on their own.

BBS Operation

IDRA has set up and currently maintains the network, housing the BBS in its offices. This allows staff to electronically capture the inter-site communication for data collection purposes and to answer system questions from the instructors in a timely fashion. Staff can also set up areas within the network for the publishing of final draft efforts. Students who choose to do so can request that their works be posted in a public area of the BBS where all who want to can see their work.

The screen in the box on Page 7 welcomes users to the SALNET BBS. Once they have been welcomed into the BBS, users can choose to go the conference area where they will be greeted by a screen that asks them to choose a conference to join (see box at left).

Having joined a conference, users can read messages others have left in the conference area, reply to those messages, or create new messages. Conference messages are usually public, that is, they can be read by all users. When conference areas are successful, they become an on-going conversation with others about topics of mutual interest.

Users can also choose to send (download) or receive (upload) files. On the SALNET BBS these files consist of the poems, stories and other creations that adult

Project SALNET - continued on page 15

Through Project SALNET, BBS users can join a conference to converse electronically about a particular topic.

Conference Listings

Description

1. Parents: Are you a parent or grandparent? Do you ever wonder how to get along better with your toddlers or teenagers? Get advice from others or share some of your own wisdom.

2. Jobs: Are you looking for a job? Or do you have a job, but your bosses or your coworkers give you a hard time? Ask others for advice on how to find and keep good jobs.

3. Hobbies: Do you cook, paint, sew, fix cars? Share your recipes and your how-to knowledge with other experts and beginners.

4. Sports: Do you support the Spurs, the Oilers, the Missions? What do you think about upcoming games, specific players or coaches, our chances for the playoffs?

5. Other: Would you like to address a topic not listed above? Use this conference to talk about anything else.

School Opening Alert Issued

The anti-immigrant climate in this country has reached devastating proportions. With passage of Proposition 187 in California and the subsequent rise in school exclusion incidents across the country, it is now more important than ever to make sure parents know their children's educational rights.

To aid the process of parental educational, the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) has launched its annual *School Opening Alert* campaign, which provides immigrant parents, educators and advocates with an information pamphlet outlining immigrants students' legal right of access to schools established in the U.S. Supreme Court *Plyler vs. Doe* decision. The pamphlet outlines:

1) the specific educational rights of documented and undocumented immigrants students found in the *Plyler vs. Doe* ruling; and
2) what schools must do to be in compliance with the law during the student enrollment process.

NCAS and other educational advocates feel that any student who may "look" like an immigrant may be targeted during the school enrollment process. Therefore, all parents and school staff should know that the schools can and cannot do.

IDRA is working with NCAS to make this pamphlet available to all parents and community members who may need this information. NCAS can provide a camera-ready copy of the *School Opening Alert* to be reproduced and distributed by schools and community groups. The pamphlet is available in English/Spanish and English/Creole.

For a more thorough explanation of *Plyler vs. Doe,* NCAS offers *Immigrant Students: Their Legal Right of Access to Public Schools,* a 55-page guide for advocates and educators ($12).

Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202 (1982)] that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are obliged under state law to attend school until they reach a mandated age.

As a result of the *Plyler vs. Doe* ruling, public schools may not:

- Deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status.
- Treat a student disparately to determine residency.
- Engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access of school.
- Require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status.
- Make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status.
- Require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status.

Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch or breakfast program on behalf of a student need only indicate on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Additionally, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and various state privacy acts prohibit schools from providing any outside agency – including the Immigration and Naturalization Service – with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status without first acquiring permission from the student's parents. Schools should note that even requesting such permission from parents may act to "chill" a student's *Plyler vs. Doe* rights.

Finally, school personnel – especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities – should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

To order free copies of this flier or to report incidents of school exclusion or delay, call:

NCAS	Nationwide	800-441-7192 (English-EN/Spanish-SP)
IDRA	Statewide	210-684-8180 (EN/SP)
Texas Immigrant & Refugee Coalition	Statewide	214-528-4870 (EN/SP
American Friends Service Committee	Houston	713-926-2799 (SP/EN)
Texas Migrant Council	Laredo	210-722-5174 (SP/EN)

Good Common School 10 Educational Entitlements of All School Children

Children are entitled to...

1. Have parents, advocates and concerned educators involved in all decisions affecting their education.
2. Learn in an integrated, heterogeneous setting responsive to different learning styles and abilities.
3. Comprehensible, culturally supportive and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.
4. Access to a common body of knowledge and the opportunity to acquire higher-order skills.
5. A broadly-based assessment of their academic progress and grading structures that enhance individual strengths and potential.
6. A broad range of support services that address individual needs.
7. Attend schools that are safe, attractive and free from prejudice.
8. Attend school unless they pose a danger to other children or school staff.
9. Instruction by teachers who hold high expectations for all students and who are fully prepared to meet the challenges of diverse classrooms.
10. An equal educational opportunity supported by the provision of greater resources to schools serving students most vulnerable to school failure.

Excerpted from *The Good Common School: Making the Vision Work for All Children.* (National Coalition of Advocates for Students: Boston, Mass., 1991) pp 3-9.

***Adult Literacy** - continued from page 1*

tive director, wrote:

> As you read through this report, you will see charts and graphs that reveal the extent of illiteracy in our community. We present statistics and demographic trends that show how illiteracy blights our city's future. We even tell you the names of organizations that provide literacy services in San Antonio so that more of us can learn about the help that is available in combating illiteracy. What we cannot show you are the faces of the people behind the numbers, people who are themselves unable to read this report or any other document nor the setbacks they have suffered because of illiteracy. But you see them every day. They are our neighbors, our coworkers, our family members, our friends. They are the people in our community who live each day cut off from many opportunities and rewards by the lack of a skill many of us incorrectly assume is universal: literacy. Without literacy, these people are unable to contribute to their fullest potential, and we can only wonder what great contributions to our city have gone unrealized.
>
> It is clear to us that not only in San Antonio, but in Texas and across the nation, families need literacy to improve their lives, to control their destiny and to support children in being autonomous and achieving their dreams in today's world.
>
> Even though we used the word *blight* in connection with illiteracy, it is important to note that the human being is inherently whole and healthy without literacy. The world has had millions of wonderful, productive, happy and even saintly persons who could not read and write. Many of my great uncles, some who worked on the railroad, others that were ranchers and farmers, could barely sign their names. They were orally proficient, had great memories and could weave tales the length of a contemporary novel. No blight on them or their communities! No more than illiterate Scandinavians that raised cows in the Midwest or limited-English-proficient Asians who built railroads in the nineteenth century. And they all would have benefitted from being literate.
>
> Today, families who were part of the Southwest's cheap labor pool, who were needed for backbreaking, low-paying labor that did not require literacy, now cannot find jobs to adequately sustain themselves. Not only do they need to know how to read and write, they also need to understand and use computer technology. Our findings in San Antonio mirrored what we see nationally. There is a correlation between illiteracy, poverty and limited English proficiency. I will not romanticize the conditions of economic want, but I need to make the point: Those persons who cannot understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction are nevertheless good and valuable in themselves. Those who cannot locate and use information in job applications, transportations schedules, contracts and maps are inherently complete. And even if they cannot balance a checkbook, determine the annual interest on an advertised loan or compute the percentage of their income that goes for food, housing and clothes, they are inherently worthy of respect and have no less dignity as human beings.

Why Literacy Outreach?

The quotes opening this article are from the research being conducted for the IDRA Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations project, funded by the Texas Education Agency. This project speaks to all adult audiences, the wealthy and those who have little or no influence on our institutions, the highly literate and those that greatly need and want literacy. It will reflect the dignity and worth of the individual and the family and the need for literacy.

The project's focus is on adult education and literacy in Texas. The vision is to create awareness about the need for literacy and to create a *community will* for universal literacy. It includes public information dissemination through media and training for personnel in implementing outreach initiatives and coordinating statewide and/or regional outreach services. The project also addresses outreach networking issues and the integration of effective public relations efforts to reach populations who are underserved.

One of IDRA's objectives for the Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations project is to increase the number of literate adults in Texas. This campaign is being designed with the intention of setting activities that will lead to a concerted community will around literacy, the momentum of which will carry on and multiply the campaign's

***Adult Literacy** - continued on page 13*

Adult Literacy - continued from page 12

outcomes. As more and more people are touched by their involvement in literacy efforts – either as participants in literacy programs or volunteers in literacy centers – they will share their stories with others, and they will invite others to become involved. As excitement grows, the campaign will take on a life of its own and the community accepts responsibility to achieve universal literacy. The tangible results desired include:

- an increase in the number of businesses engaged in literacy projects,
- an increase in media exposure,
- more adults served by literacy projects, and
- a higher than normal increase in literacy activities in general.

IDRA is developing a creative strategy and a media plan. The purpose of the creative strategy is to identify the most effective message to comprise the campaign and the best way to communicate that message. The media plan will outline the specific types of media the campaign will utilize to reach the target market.

Why Leadership?

Equally important to IDRA that families be literate, is that parents collaborate in achieving the best education possible for their children. In an *IDRA Newsletter* article, "Parents Reclaiming Their Schools: New Initiative Brings Parents Together for Better Schools," I wrote, "Parents of all socioeconomic levels and all cultural groups can participate meaningfully in their children's schools" (1994). Through the national Mobilization For Equity (MFE) project, funded by the Ford Foundation and the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS), IDRA is expanding its Parents Reclaiming Their Schools efforts. MFE has as underlying principles the "Good Common School 10 Educational Entitlements of All School Children." The first one is, "Children are entitled to have parents, advocates and concerned educators involved in all decisions affecting their education" (see box on Page 12 for all 10 entitlements).

As part of a national effort by NCAS member organizations, a set of broad national goals have been determined as follows:

- Build public will to implement a powerful equity agenda by training substantial numbers of parents and families of excluded school-aged children and building capacity of organizations in their communities to understand the root causes of their children's school exclusion, how exclusion would end if schools provided necessary student rights, and how systems advocacy strategies must be employed to achieve this equity agenda.
- Build public will to implement a powerful equity agenda among advocates working within the public education establishment, sympathetic policy makers and others, in order to end exclusion by public schools of students and families, based upon race, class, newcomer status, home language and disability.
- Demonstrate and document the power of an adequately resourced coalition to empower communities to implement an education equity agenda through a strongly coordinated, multi-level highly accountable and reflective process.

THE WORLD HAS HAD MILLIONS OF WONDERFUL, PRODUCTIVE, HAPPY AND EVEN SAINTLY PERSONS WHO COULD NOT READ AND WRITE... AND THEY ALL WOULD HAVE BENEFITTED FROM BEING LITERATE.

IDRA's Goals

IDRA's long-term vision is for the development of state policy initiatives that reflect the wishes and concerns of minority families in educational access and excellence for children. IDRA's policy states: "In our community, we envision the development of local policy initiatives that reflect the wishes and concerns of minority families in educational access and excellence for all children. Areas of focus in policy will be bilingual education, immigrant students, school finance, equity, school choice and school accountability. Increased parent representation on relevant boards and committees will be sought."

In its work with parents, IDRA will develop a Parent Reclamation of Schools Network of parents in Texas who can effectively use systems advocacy strategies at the national, state and local levels to ensure key student rights for all children. Parents will be assisted to set goals, solve problems, develop plans of action and assess their progress in improving the education of their children. IDRA will also support the development of a coalition of Latino parent advocacy organizations to nurture and enable parent leadership to speak out at the local and state levels. An emphasis will be placed upon integrated involvement of middle-class and working-class parents.

In its work with educators, IDRA will train teachers and administrators to involve parents as effective decision-makers at the campus and district levels where their children attend schools and will work to improve school and media perceptions of parent participation in decision-making processes at their children's public schools.

In its work for networking, IDRA will assist in the construction of a national data base of informed individuals and organizations that support the MFE vision of fair schools and to establish strong communications mechanisms between national, state and local MFE activities. IDRA will ensure implementation of the MFE national evaluation plan and facilitate reporting to national project funder(s), and strengthening of the national project through NCAS-wide reflective processes.

Family literacy and leadership are two critical elements necessary in creating schools that work for all children. Through our current projects, IDRA hopes to foster both.

Resources

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Aurelio Montemayor is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. He is the project director for the Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations project and for IDRA's role in the Mobilization For Equity project.

COMING UP!

In October, the *IDRA Newsletter* focuses on Youth Leadership.

Exploring New Directions *- continued from page 5*

The interview probes students' past educational experiences, reading instructional histories, as well as their learning needs and goals for learning.

The first step in revamping assessment in adult literacy is to make it more responsive to students' needs. Most adult students who are illiterate have definite ideas about what their problems are and what has or has not worked for them in instruction in the past. In fact, an old but useful definition of illiteracy defines an illiterate adult as "one who thinks he or she has a reading or writing problem" (Charnley and Jones, 1986). Operating from that definition, inquiring about the characteristics of students' problems with literacy and past instructional histories would be much more profitable than information from a standardized literacy test. Furthermore, the interview would also provide valuable information that would allow instruction to be tailored to the individual student's needs and preferences.

Following the initial in-take interview, the assessment process consists of conducting a portfolio assessment for each student. Student portfolios admit a variety of materials and include other informal forms of assessment such as student self-assessment checklists on reading strategy use, inventories of the type and frequency of reading done outside of class, and rubrics for evaluating their progress in different areas of functional literacy. In addition, more structured indices of reading ability such as informal reading inventories, dictations, or directed listening-thinking activities (predictions of a story in interrupted text) may be included, if they form part of instruction.

Students should be responsible for selecting what information is kept in the portfolio, which should be reviewed with the tutor or teacher on a weekly basis. Those conferences serve to document student progress as well as the degree to which the initial syllabus designed by the student and tutor or teacher has been followed. That information can be used to realign the path of instruction with students' needs and goals for learning. The use of the initial in-take interview coupled with weekly student / tutor (or teacher) conferences to review student portfolios make students active partners in their own assessment. This system of customized learning and assessment also has the potential to increase students' involvement in their own assessment and instruction and to ensure that they are able to keep track of their progress in fulfilling self determined goals of functional literacy.

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Literacy is Vital *- continued from page 3*

grounds work together so that the government does serve all people and where communities take responsibility for each other – is the task of us all and the true goal of literacy.

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Mikki Symonds is a research assistant in the IDRA Division of Research and Evaluation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Texas Association for Bilingual Educators (TABE) Conference
November 8-11, 1995
El Paso, Texas

For more information, call TABE at 800-484-5745, ext. 8223

"Working Together for All Children"
The U.S. Dept. of Education's Second Annual Conference on Improving America's Schools
December 3-6, 1995
Washington, D.C.

For more information, call USDE at 800-328-1312

National Association for Bilingual Educators (NABE) Conference
March 12-16, 1996
Orlando, Florida

For more information call NABE at 202-898-1829

Implementing Family *- continued from page 6*

that should be considered in beginning a family literacy program of any type or size (1991).

1. The program design should recognize the existence of multiple literacies and literacy behaviors in the home and community, and it should integrate home and school literacies.
2. The program should build on the strengths of parents and their culture (such as oral language traditions and native language literacy) and set literacy education in a meaningful cultural context.
3. Instruction in parenting skills should be sensitive to cultural differences in child rearing and family dynamics. Parents should be assisted in being advocates of their children's education.
4. Family literacy programs need a holistic approach achieved through collaboration of several agencies and multidisciplinary staff. Parents must be partners in the collaboration.
5. Program evaluation should use the broad definition of literacy that guides program design (informal and ethnographic techniques may be most appropriate).

Earlier approaches to family literacy centered primarily on parents as partners in helping their children learn to read. That perspective is naturally important, but with vast changes in the demographics of schools and communities, family literacy needs to be approached in a much broader context. And, although there is agreement among educators that family literacy programs are important, they are not yet a priority in many schools. Schools need to incorporate the concept of family literacy into their curriculum just as they incorporate holistic strategies for literacy instruction for children in the classroom (Morrow and Paratore, 1993). For more information on family literacy, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

Resources

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Ninta Adame-Reyna is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

BE INFORMED AND INSPIRED WITH THE IDRA NEWSLETTER!

Timely, reliable and full of stories of innovation, the *IDRA Newsletter* ensures that readers have the tools they need to create schools that work for all children. Stories of professional development that is based on valuing, of self and others. Stories of how parents of all socio-economic levels and all cultural groups can participate meaningfully in their children's schools. Stories of people finding alternatives to traditional methods of testing and assessment, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to become empowered learners. Stories of how technology is transforming the learning process and the ways schools operate. Stories about resources – publications, research reports, workshops, technical assistance, networks – that are helping people re-make schools into creative environments, responsive to their communities.

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Share the *IDRA Newsletter* with your friends and colleagues! If you already receive the *IDRA Newsletter* regularly, use the form on Page 18 to make sure your friends and colleagues are

Project SALNET *- continued from page 10*

learners have written and word processed in their adult education classes. The files are sent to other adult learners for their review, for their praise and constructive criticism. These review comments are then transmitted electronically back to the original authors.

Giving students real audiences for their creations is known to be the best way to motivate and stimulate student writing. Although the SALNET BBS is still progressing to full usage, we anticipate additional miracles of growth and learning to occur when students realize how much it expands the audiences for their work.

Resources

Green, Laura Chris. "The Effects of Word Processing and a Process Approach to Writing on the Reading and Writing Achievement, Revision and Editing Strategies and Attitudes Towards Writing of Third-grade Mexican American Students," unpublished dissertation (University of Texas at Austin, 1991).

Dr. Laura Chris Green is a senior education associate and project director for Project SALNET in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

Magnet Schools: Pockets of Excellence in a Sea of Diversity

Bradley Scott, M.A. and Anna De Luna

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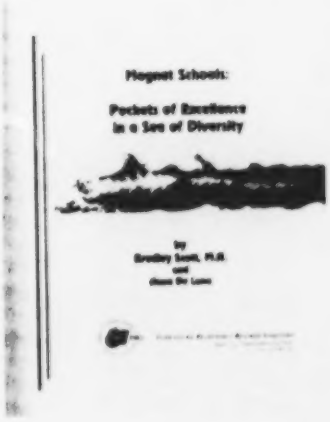
- ✔ Strategies for student/teacher ratios
- ✔ Strategies for curriculum
- ✔ Strategies for the magnet school image
- ✔ Strategies for the physical environment
- ✔ Strategies for student outcomes
- ✔ Strategies for student support
- ✔ Strategies for race relations
- ✔ Strategies for parent and community involvement
- ✔ Strategies for magnet and non-magnet school collaboration



Pockets of Excellence reports on 11 magnet school campuses in four school districts in Federal Region VI involving the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. In addition to the information for magnet schools, *Pockets of Excellence* also offers recommendations about effective strategies in the operation of magnet schools that might be adopted by non-magnet schools in desegregated settings as a part of their school improvement and restructuring efforts.

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Price is $25.00 and includes shipping and handling. Orders totaling less than $30 must be pre-paid. Fill out the form on Page 18 to order.

RESOURCES ON LIFELONG LEARNING

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND INFORMATION

A FULLY LITERATE SOCIETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

- Leslie Limage, "The Industrialized Countries: Questions and Answers," The UNESCO Courier, July 1990

Adame-Reyna, Ninta. **"Literacy: A Decade of Commitment,"** *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 1994), XXI(8), pp. 3, 13.

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García, Juanita. **"Literacy and the Magical Kingdom in the Sky,"** *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 1994), XXI(8). pp. 4-5.

Graff, Harvy J. "National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Lessons," *Texas Journal of Ideas, History and Culture* (Spring/Summer 1994), pp. 12-17.

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Titles in bold are available from IDRA at no cost.
Contact IDRA's Communications Manager to obtain reprints. Thank you.

IDRA WORKSHOPS

To request further information on these or other training and technical assistance topics, please contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS

All You Ever Needed to Know About Working with the Limited English Speaker

Teaching is a difficult job at any stage of your career, but help is here for one group of instructors: beginning English as a second language teachers. Participants work together in identifying the demands of the limited-English-proficient student and understand the processes and instructional needs of the student.

English as a Second Language: Classroom Strategies that Work

Making the transition into the English-dominant classroom can be a confusing time for students who predominantly speak Spanish. Teachers attending this full-day workshop review the processes for acquiring first and second languages and how the two are connected. Ways to classify students according to English proficiency are also explored. Participants experience creative dramatics activities that help build oral language and literacy skills.

Pathways Reading Strategies

In this full-day workshop participants develop an understanding of the needs of the limited-English-proficient (LEP) students taking the TAAS test; learn a series of multi-cognitive learning strategies for integrating the TAAS objectives into regular classroom instruction; review the TAAS reading objectives and instructional targets; become familiar with reading as a process; and construct TAAS-like sample items. Participants also review techniques that assist in integrating language and content instruction; learn four strategies to assist secondary LEP students in their preparation for the writing, math and reading portions of the test; and learn to integrate language learning strategies and activities into specific content area teaching.

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THE STATE OF LITERACY IN SAN ANTONIO IN THE 1990S

by Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Josie D. Supik, M.A., Felix Montes, Ph.D. and Ninta Adame-Reyna, M.A.

Facts about illiteracy in San Antonio with recommendations for solutions of the problem. Extensive graphs, statistics and demographic trends and a list of service providers are included.

24 Pages; $10.00
1994; Paperback; ISBN#1-878550-50-0

FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESSES (TRAINING MODULE I)

by Frank Gonzales, Ph.D.

This first segment of IDRA's training modules familiarizes participants with the processes a non-English-speaking student goes through as he or she acquires English as a second language.

74 Pages; $8.50
1995 Second Edition; Quality Paperback; ISBN#1-878550-10-1

TEACHING CONTENT: ESL STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS (TRAINING MODULE II)

by Frank Gonzales, Ed.D. and Erline Buckley, M.A.

This recently revised module familiarizes participants with classroom management theory and strategies in order to integrate the ESL student successfully into the content area classroom.

52 Pages; $8.50
1995 Revised; Quality Paperback; ISBN#1-878550-56-X

THE THEORY OF INCOMPATIBILITIES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONDING TO THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HISPANIC AMERICANS

by José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D. and Blandina Cárdenas, Ph.D.

This publication discusses the five areas of incompatibility (poverty, culture, language, mobility, and societal perceptions of Mexican American children) that are detrimental to the child's learning.

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SCHEDULE OF IDRA TRAINING AND WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1995

This list includes activities that have been scheduled for particular school districts and other groups. They are not open to the public. For information on scheduling a similar event for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

DATE	SCHOOL DISTRICT/AGENCY	TOPIC
Sept. 1	Alice Independent School District (ISD)	Using Computers to Enhance First and Second Language Needs Assessment
	Bishop Consolidated ISD (CISD)	Using Computers to Enhance First and Second Language Needs Assessment
	Brownsville ISD	Valued Youth Program (VYP) – First Implementation Team Meeting
	Freer ISD	Using Computers to Enhance First and Second Language Acquisition Needs Assessment
	Southside ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Start-Up
Sept. 2	Education Service Center (ESC) Region 20 – San Antonio, Texas	Parents as Teachers
Sept. 5	Northside ISD	Introduction to Young Scientists Acquiring English (YSAE) Project
	San Diego ISD	Bilingual Education
Sept. 6	Marfa ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – First Implementation Team Meeting (Parent Orientation)
	Ector County ISD	Cultural Enrichment for the Bilingual Education Classroom
	El Paso ISD	Introduction to *CALLA*
	Rio Grande City CISD	Coca-Cola VYP – First Implementation Team Meeting
Sept. 7	Cobre Consolidated School District (CSD) – Bayard, New Mexico	Coca-Cola VYP – First Implementation Team Meeting (Elementary Receiving Teacher Training)
	ESC Region 3 - Victoria, Texas	Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPAC)
	Taylor ISD	Technical Assistance and Classroom Visits
Sept. 8	Cobre CSD – Bayard, New Mexico	Coca-Cola VYP – Parent Meeting with Receiving Teachers and Teacher Coordinators
	Georgia State Department of Education – Atlanta, Georgia	Review Needs of English as a Second Language (ESL) Students in the State
	Roma ISD	Reading Project
Sept. 11	Mission ISD	ESL Strategies for ESL, Title I and Mainstream Teachers
	Roma ISD	Reading Project
Sept. 12	Corpus Christi, Texas	Creating Experiences that Develop Language in Children
	McAllen ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Tutor Orientation and Parent Orientation
	Rio Grande City CISD	Needs Assessment CSWOCAM (World Class Achievement in Math)
Sept. 13	Herford ISD	Authentic Portfolio Assessment
	La Joya ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – First Implementation Meeting
	Livingston ISD	Embracing Cultural Diversity in School
	Louisiana Public Broadcasting	Dealing with Diversity
	Rio Grande City CISD	Needs Assessment
	Southside ISD	Needs Assessment and ESL Training
Sept. 14	Cuidad Juarez, México	OBEMLA (Office for Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs) Professional Development

SCHEDULE OF IDRA TRAINING AND WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1995

DATE	SCHOOL DISTRICT/AGENCY	TOPIC
Sept. 14	Southside ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – First Implementation Team Meeting
Sept. 16	Laredo ISD	ESL Strategies
Sept. 18	San Antonio ISD	Staff Development Plan
Sept. 19	Goose Creek ISD	Transition to English
	El Paso ISD	Promoting Second Language Acquisition in the Classroom
	McAllen ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Teacher Orientation
	Rio Grande City CISD	Reading Project
	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	Reading Strategies
Sept. 20	McAllen ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Tutor Orientation and Parent Orientation
Sept. 21	Illinois State Board of Education	Documenting Bilingual Language Proficiency
	Seguin ISD	Strategy Training
	Sinton, Texas, Daycare	Understanding Your Child and Yourself
Sept. 22	Pasadena ISD	Language Acquisition
	Southside ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Teacher Orientation
Sept. 23	Corpus Christi, Texas	Early Childhood Training
Sept. 25	Harlandale ISD	Cooperative Learning
	San Antonio ISD	Planning Staff Development
	San Antonio ISD	YSAE – First Task Force Meeting
Sept. 26	El Paso ISD	Title I – Parent Rights
	Houston ISD	Coca-Cola VYP – Trainer Certification
Sept. 27	Houston ISD	TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) – Math
	Houston ISD	Implementation Team Meeting
Sept. 28	Region 6 – Huntsville, Texas	Starting Today...Steps to Success for Beginning Bilingual Educators
Sept. 29	Donna ISD	Team Building Part I
	Donna ISD	WOW (Workshop on Workshops)
	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Grading Policy Relevant to ESL Students

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